RIDECELL

The next revolution will be autonomous

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Another major transformation is just around the corner: autonomous vehicles. What will corporate fleets look like, and how will they be managed, when the act of driving itself becomes optional? Here's a glimpse at some of the implications to the industry.

A vision for the future

Elon Musk imagines a day when Tesla owners can sit back and let their car drive for them — and when they aren't using it, let it roam the streets as a revenue-generating 'Robotaxi'.

Chris Jackson, who runs one of Britain's largest vehicle fleets as Head of Fleet Electric Vehicle Strategy at Centrica, agrees that autonomous fleets will be the next progression for fleet operators from the shared model. "Not only in the form of significant savings from the reduced number of vehicles," he says, "but also from the combined benefits of increased productivity and reduction in stressful travelling this will bring."

Intel and Strategy Analytics claim that **autonomous vehicles will be responsible for US$7 trillion worth of economic activity and new efficiencies annually by 2050** — over half of which will come from driverless ride-hailing services. There are many other benefits and applications as well.

Enhanced productivity

Progressing toward fully-autonomous vehicles is integral to the overall, long-term MaaS vision. Users should be able to move seamlessly through a city or region, hopping from one transport mode or another.

"MaaS will ultimately mean fewer 'traditional' fleet vehicles, so seamlessly integrating other forms of transport into the overall asset mix should be seen as a logical progression", says Chris Jackson. "**Fleets will see shared mobility as a chance to add a layer of increased productivity due to less time lost while driving and also a generally more mobile workforce**, and a good CSR benefit would be increased efficiency from more people using fewer vehicles".

Last mile robot logistics

Accessing autonomous roaming fleets — either owned or provided by third party operators — will likely be of most interest for "last mile" logistics. Amazon has invested over $1 billion in autonomous technology, including by piloting delivery robots, and acquiring startup Aurora. It's betting that shared and autonomous technology will be mutually supportive in logistics.

According to Adam Robinson of logistics company Cerasis, "**Last mile automation and robotics can level the playing field between companies that built dedicated logistics networks with last mile delivery in mind and those new to the game** or just beginning to embrace the technological revolution."

Commercial trucking applications

Benoit Laflamme sees autonomy transforming the heavy truck space, too. "The big reality in transport is: we are faced with an aging [employee] population and an undesirable lifestyle for the younger generation. That is really shifting things. Most large companies are really keen on seeing developments in driverless vehicles because all of a sudden, those problems can be fixed."

One of the most promising short-term applications of autonomous technology is platooning for commercial vehicles. Trucks traveling close together significantly reduce air-drag friction, facilitating emissions reductions and fuel savings up to 10%. It also may mean that only the lead vehicle requires a driver.

New value for fleet management

The fleet management industry has the potential to grow into an integral part of a new mobility value chain.

"Autonomous vehicles have the potential to be a game changer to fleet management and car sharing along the dimensions of availability and profitability", says Karsten Crede, of ERGO Digital Ventures AG (who have also invested into Ridecell). The connected fleet is enabled for greater availability, and as Krede notes, "Availability means longer operating hours as well as on-demand re-location of cars."

Safety in numbers

The US and Europe each suffer around 35,000 annual road fatalities, from over 5 million vehicle crashes, respectively. **Over 90% of these fatalities are attributable to human-driving, and a significant number of these are of so-called vulnerable road users: bicyclists, pedestrians and motorcyclists** — often times overseen by ever-heavier and more isolated vehicles. There is reason to believe autonomous technology will reduce this.

Benoit Laflamme expects this to be the biggest impact in the HGV space, too: "If you are in an HGV, you are quickly presumed to be at fault if you hit a smaller vehicle or pedestrian. Eliminating human error will have a big safety and compliance impact."

Ridecell: a good choice for fleet operators.

The cost and challenges of operating a fleet are seen as a necessary evil by many corporations. In the shared mobility future, Ridecell strongly believes this shouldn't be the case.

For the past 10 years, Ridecell has been in the shared mobility business developing the world's only High-yield shared mobility™ platform. It can can help organizations position themselves within the new Mobility-as-a-Service value chain, and put their fleet on the path from ongoing cost to potential for profit.

With our toolkit of intelligent software, services, and ecosystem partnerships, Ridecell customers are able to enable shared fleets, maximize operational efficiency and fleet utilization, better engage employees, boost corporate responsibility credentials, and open up potential new business models and revenue streams.

Most importantly, the Ridecell High-yield Shared Mobility platform helps future-proof businesses against disruption. No matter how or when it happens, Ridecell customers are covered.

About the authors

This white paper was developed as a collaboration between industry thought leaders.

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